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Message Text

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51
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 SSC-01 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

TRSE-00 TAR-01 CIEP-01 SCA-01 HUD-01 DOTE-00 NEA-09

SAB-01 SAM-01 EUR-12 /101 W
---------- 127985
R 270519Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5366
INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMCONSUL SYDNEY
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
CINCPAC

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SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN OPPOSITION LEADER FRASER ANNOUNCES NEW SHADOW MINISTRY

REF: CANBERRA 1778

1. SUMMARY: OPPOSITION LEADER FRASER ANNOUNCED COMPOSITION OF NEW SHADOW MINISTRY MAR 26. FORMER OPPOSITION LEADER SNEDDEN NOT INCLUDED, AT HIS OWN REQUEST, AND TWO OTHER FORMER MEMBERS OF OPPOSITION FRONT BENCH ALSO NOT IN NEW TEAM, WHICH WILL NUMBER 30, INSTEAD OF PREVIOUS LIST OF 27. ANDREW PEACOCK REMAINS AS SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER, AND D. J. KILLEN BECOMES SHADOW DEFENSE MINISTER, A MOVE WHICH CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHENS OPPOSITION FRONT BENCH. PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM HAS BEEN CURIOUSLY CAUTIOUS
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IN EVALUATING OPPOSITION CHANGES, AND NEXT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

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(APRIL 8-23) LIKELY TO INDICATE TREND OF EVENTS MORE CLEARLY. FRASER BEGINNING TO SPELL OUT HIS VIEWS ON RANGE OF ISSUES IN MORE DETAIL, EMPHASIZING TWIN THEMES OF OPPORTUNITY (ENCOURAGING INDIVIDUALS TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN CAPACITIES) AND CONCERN (IN PARTICULAR FOR THE DISADVANTAGED). END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER RELATIVELY LEISURELY PROCESS OF MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS WITH LIBERAL AND COUNTRY PARTY LEADERS, MR J. MALCOLM FRASER, ELECTED LIBERAL PARTY LEADER (AND THEREFORE OPPOSITION LEADER) MAR 21, ANNOUNCED COMPOSITION OF 30-MEMBER QTE SHADOW MINISTRY END QTE ON MAR 26. IN EXPANDING OPPOSITION FRONT BENCH TO 30, AS AGAINST 27 UNDER FORMER OPPOSITION LEADER SNEDDEN, FRASER MADE CLEAR A FUTURE LIBERAL-COUNTRY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SMALLER THAN NEW SHADOW MINISTRY. ENLARGEMENT OF MINISTRY AT THIS TIME IS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR TALENTS.

3. THERE ARE FIVE NEW FACES IN SHADOW MINISTRY AND A REDISTRIBUT-ION OF FOUR PORTFOLIOS. HOWEVER, BULK OF SHADOW MINISTRY REMAINS SAME AS UNDER SNEDDEN. PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FROM U.S. POINT OF VIEW ARE RETENTION OF ANDREW PEACOCK AS SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER AND APPOINTMENT OF D.J. KILLEN AS SHADOW DEFENSE MINISTER. PEACOCK HAS PERFORMED WITH GREAT EFFECTIVENESS IN THIS POSITION AND TOLD US WELL IN ADVANCE OF RECENT CHANGE OF OPPOSITION LEAD-ERS THAT FRASER HAD ASSURED HIM HE WANTED PEACOCK TO REMAIN AS SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER. APPOINTMENT OF KILLEN AS SHADOW DEFENSE MINISTER REPRESENTS CONSIDERABLE STRENGTHENING OF SHADOW MINISTRY. KILLEN HAD SERVED AS MINISTER FOR NAVY UNDER PRIME MINISTER GORTON, 1969-71. A GIFTED BARRISTER, CONSTITUTIONAL LAWYER, AND AN EFFECTIVE SPEAKER, KILLEN REPLACES THE GENERALLY INEFFECTIVE A.J. FORBES, WHO HAD MADE CLEAR HE WOULD NOT SERVE IN FRASER'S SHADOW MINISTRY. MOREOVER, AS KILLEN HAS BEEN CLOSE POLITICAL ASSOCIATE OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER GORTON, KILLEN'S PRESENCE IN KEY DEFENSE SHADOW PORTFOLIO IS FORM OF INSURANCE TO FRASER AGAINST DAMAGING SNIPING WHICH GORTON , AN INVETERATE OPPONENT OF FRASER'S, IS STILL CAPABLE OF.

4. MOST STRIKING BY THEIR ABSENCE FROM SHADOW MINISTRY ARE FORMER OPPOSITION LEADER SNEDDEN AND FORMER SPOKESMAN FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS R.J. ELLICOTT. A.J. FORBES ALSO NOT INCLUDED,
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AS NOTED ABOVE. SNEDDEN AND FRASER EXCHANGED LETTERS (TEXTS PROMPTLY MADE PUBLIC BY FRASER) MAR 25, IN WHICH FRASER OFFERED, AND SNEDDEN REFUSED SPECIAL PORTFOLIO COVERING FEDERAL/STATE RELATIONS. SNEDDEN SAID THIS WAS NOT REALLY SUBSTANTIAL POSITION AND, CUTTING ACROSS NUMEROUS PORTFOLIOS AS IT DOES, WOULD LEAD HIM INTO CONFLICT WITH HIS COLLEAGUES. FRASER EXPRESSED REGRET AT SNEDDEN'S DECISION AND NOTED SNEDDEN HAD NOT INDICATED INTEREST IN ANY OTHER POSITION SUCH AS TREASURY, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENSE,

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OR LABOR. ELLICOTT, FORMERLY COMMONWEALTH SOLICITOR GENERAL AND DISTINGUISHED LAWYER WITH GROWING PRACTICE IN SYDNEY, SAID HE COULD NOT SERVE IN SHADOW MINISTRY, AS FRASER HAD MADE CLEAR THIS WOULD BE FULL-TIME JOB, INCOMPATIBLE WITH SIGNIFICANT DEGREE OF OUTSIDE BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL INTEREST.

5. LIBERAL-COUNTRY BALANCE ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED IN NEW TEAM. BALANCE IN PREVIOUS SHADOW MINISTRY WAS 20 LIBERALS, 7 COUNTRY PARTY. NEW SHADOW MINISTRY HAS 21 LIBERALS AND 9 COUNTRY PARTY.

6. SHADOW MINISTRY AS ANNOUNCED BY FRASER MARCH 26 AS FOLLOWS: J.M. FRASER, LEADER OF OPPOSITION; P.R. LYNCH, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, TREASURY; SENATOR R.G. WITHERS, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE SENATE, SERVICES AND PROPERTY; SENATOR I. GREENWOOD DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE SENATE, ATTORNEY-GENERAL; SENATOR R.C. COTTON, MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT; A.S. PEACOCK, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, EXTERNAL TERRITORIES; D.L. CHIPP, SOCIAL SECURITY AND WELFARE; D.J. KILLEN, DEFENCE; SENATOR J.L. CARRICK, FEDERALISM AND INTER-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS; A.A. STREET, LABOUR; SENATOR P.E. RAE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, TOURISM, PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR TASMANIA; DR. H.R. EDWARDS, TARIFF AND INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE COMMISSION; SENATOR MARGARET GUILFOYLE, EDUCATION; M.J.R. MACKELLAR, IMMIGRATION; E.J. MCLEAY, HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION; SENATOR P.D. DURACK, PMG; R.V. GARLAND, PUBLIC SERVICE, ACT, QTE SHADOW MINISTER END QTE ASSISTING THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION; E.L. ROBINSON, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, QTE SHADOW MINISTER END QTE ASSISTING THE QTE SHADOW TREASURER END QTE; J. HOWARD, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND COMMERCE; SENATOR H. YOUNG, MEDIA; I.B.C. WILSON, URBAN AFFAIRS; J.D. ANTHONY, LEADER OF THE COUNTRY PARTY, TRADE, RESOURCES AND DECENTRALISED DEVELOPMENT; I. SINCLAIR, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNTRY PARTY, PRIMARY INDUSTRY, OPPOSITION LEADER OF THE HOUSE; P.J. NIXON, TRANSPORT; SENATOR T.G. DRAKE-
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BROCKMAN, LEADER OF THE COUNTRY PARTY IN THE SENATE, REPATRIATION AND COMPENSATION; R.J.D. HUNT, ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION; R.C. KATTER, NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT, NORTHERN TERRITORY; BRUCE LLOYD, HEALTH; A.E. ADERMANN, CUSTOMS AND EXCISE; I. ROBINSON, DECENTRALISED DEVELOPMENT.

7. EVALUATION OF NEW OPPOSITION SHADOW MINISTRY WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO DEVELOP, BUT GENERAL IMPRESSION WILL BE GIVEN BY ITS PERFORMANCE IN NEXT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT, APRIL 8-23. IN INITIAL REACTION TO FRASER ELECTION PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM COMMENTED TO ANNUAL VICTORIA CONFERENCE OF ALP MAR 23 THAT FRASER IS QTE CURIOUSLY UNKNOWN END QTE. HE CONTINUED, QTE THERE IS NOBODY SO PROMINENT IN PUBLIC LIFE WHOSE STANCE ON THE WIDER RANGE OF ISSUES IS SUCH AN ENIGMA. ONLY JOHN GORTON CLAIMS TO KNOW WHAT HE REALLY STANDS FOR. END QTE

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8. FOR HIS OWN PART FRASER SPOKE TO LIBERAL PARTY BRANCH MEETING IN MELBOURNE SUBURBS MAR 24, IN HIS FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE SINCE BECOMING OPPOSITION LEADER. HE LISTED WHAT HE CONSIDERED WERE SOME OF THE HALLMARKS OF LIBERAL POLICIES; DEVELOPMENT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND CONCERN FOR THE DISADVANTAGED; OPPORTUNITY FOR QUALITY SCHOOLING FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE THROUGH ENERGY, SKILL AND RESPONSIBILITY; OPPORTUNITY TO BUY HOMES AT REASONABLE COST AND CHANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES TO BE ABLE TO PLAN THEIR FUTURE, KNOWING GOVERNMENT WOULD HELP RATHER THAN HINDER. HE CONTINUED, QTE GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED IN BOTH ECONOMIC RESPONSIBILITY AND NATIONAL SECURITY....OPPORTUNITY AND CONCERN CANNOT BE EFFECTIVE UNLESS THE ECONOMY IS RESPONSIBLY MANAGED AND UNLESS WE RECOGNIZE OUR INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS....INTERNAL STABILITY AND PROGRESS IS DEPENDENT ON OUR NATIONAL WELL-BEING AND SECURITY. END QTE OPPORTUNITY AND CONCERN APPEAR TO BE HALLMARKS OF LIBERAL POLICY WHICH FRASER IS MENTIONING FREQUENTLY.

9. FRASER EXPRESSED HIS VIEWS AT SOME LENGTH ON RANGE OF ISSUES IN INTERVIEW WITH BULLETIN OF MAR 29 WHICH ON NEWSSTANDS MAR 26 (TEXT BEING POUCHED TO EA/ANP). BULK OF INTERVIEW ON DOMESTIC AUSTRALIAN ISSUES, BUT FRASER ANSWERED QUESTION ON SITUATION IN INDO-CHINA, STATING QTE THE VIETNAMESE HAVE BEEN SOLD OUT. WHEN THE PARIS ACCORDS WERE FIRST SIGNED, I WAS VERY NEAR TO MAKING A PERSONAL STATEMENT IN MY OWN RIGHT. I FELT THAT THEY WOULD NOT WORK AND COULD NOT WORK AND WOULD END IN THIS MESS. I
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SEE GREAT DIFFICULTIES IN THE WORLD UNFOLDING AS A RESULT OF THIS AND THE MIDDLE EAST. WHEN THE SUEZ CANAL OPENS, THE RUSSIANS WILL BE ABLE TO LINK UP THEIR MEDITERRANEAN AND VLADIVOSTOK-PACIFIC OCEAN FLEETS. THE MALACCA STRAITS AND WATERS TO OUR NORTH WILL BECOME A STRATEGIC BASE FOR THE RUSSIAN NAVY. END QTE. ASKED WHAT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO IN PRESENT SITUATION, FRASER REPLIED, QTE IT SHOULD RECOGNIZE FACTS FIRST, THAT THE WORLD IS MORE UNSTABLE....WITH THE WORLD ORDER MORE UNSTABLE OUR INDEPENDENT DEFENSE CAPACITY NEEDS TO BE STRENTHENED. INSTEAD, THE GOVERNMENT HAS RUN DOWN OUR DEFENSE CAPACITY TO A GRIEVOUS EXTENT. END QTE.
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